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AN ENQUIRY
INTO THE
PRESENT STATE OF VISITATION,
IN ASYLUMS FOR THE INSANE.



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CLEMENTS C. FRY, M. D.

AN ENQUIRY
INTO THE
PRESENT STATE OF VISITATION,
IN
ASYLUMS
FOR THE
RECEPTION OF THE INSANE;
AND INTO THE MODES
BY WHICH SUCH VISITATION MAY BE IMPROVED.

BY S. W. NICOLL.

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AN ENQUIRY, &c.

CHAPTER I.

Object of the Pamphlet.

SEVERAL attempts have been made to calculate the number of insane persons in England, whose cases call for restraint and superintendence. By one gentleman they are estimated at 1 in 7000; by another, at 1 in 2000. The returns made from the West Riding of Yorkshire, prior to the erection of the Pauper Asylum at Wakefield, make the proportion of *pauper* lunatics to the whole population, 1 in 1000; and the enquiry made on this subject by the Scotch parochial clergy, by order of parliament, gave the proportion of lunatics and ideots in Scotland, at 1 in 400. If we consider the pauper patients to be double in number to patients superior in station, and calculating from the entire returns of the West Riding, the proportion would be 3 in 2000, or 18,000 to a

population of twelve millions. When, then, it is the subject of insanity we investigate, we may say it is eighteen thousand prisoners, whose comfort and restoration is at stake: prisoners innocent of crimes, and suffering under the dispensations of Providence.

Those who have known the incalculable miseries heaped on these unhappy persons, by selfishness, ignorance, and inhumanity, have rarely failed to take a strong interest in their concerns; but on a less praiseworthy principle their treatment is not unimportant. The neglect and hardships suffered by the insane, have aggravated and fixed the disorder; and when, under proper management, it would have speedily subsided, it has, from ill treatment, become permanent. From this cause, the quantity of insanity, at any given time, may have been doubled or trebled; its attendant expenses being also doubled or trebled. If we have an hundred patients, whose disorder lasts one year each, on an average, and we take a period of ten years, there will be constantly, through that time, ten patients to provide for. But if the 100 patients are all permanently disordered, we should have 100 on hand during the entire ten years.

The proprietor, the keepers, and the domestic officers of a receptacle for the insane, must have a strong tendency to consider the interest of the patients and their own at direct variance. It is the interest of the patients to have spacious, airy

accommodations; to have the least possible personal restraint, and the greatest possible personal attention as to cleanliness. Now these requisites imply both considerable expense and considerable trouble. The proprietor of an asylum would willingly avoid the expense, the keeper would willingly avoid the trouble. If a keeper can wrap one set of patients in blankets and chain them to a wall, and pin down another set to a floor covered with straw, without even the addition of a blanket, he has saved himself a great deal of the not very pleasant task of watching and cleaning; and if forty patients can be chained down in cribs from Saturday to Monday, a keeper the less may suffice, and the actual keepers have a pleasant holiday. On these accounts, a perpetual and most vigilant superintendence of the concerns of an asylum becomes necessary. It is also necessary on another account. Patients are often not merely provoking by their stubborn and wilful conduct, but by positive violence towards their keepers or others; hence, restraint on the temper of the keeper himself becomes a matter of the greatest difficulty, and not to be obtained unless the keeper is under the control of motives of the strongest influence. The keeper must himself be kept. If he be not watched and punished, an asylum is likely to be little beyond an alternation of reciprocal violence between the prisoner and the gaoler. From these

causes, visitation has long been considered one of the first and most important matters to be attended to in the management of asylums. The Committee of the House of Commons, which sat last year, brought forward twenty-two propositions for the regulation of mad-houses; and, with the exception of two or three inferior matters, the whole refer to licensing and inspection; that is, the Committee considered visitation as the one thing needful. In this I entirely agree, having a full confidence that when visitation is fixed on due principles, every thing else which is requisite will, in time, follow. We are acquainted with visitation in various forms.

It is the object of the Second Chapter briefly to state the principal forms adopted in this country.

In the Third Chapter I propose to show, by different instances, the practical effects arising from each species of visitation. In doing this, I have been greatly aided by the Reports of the Committees of the House of Commons, which sat in 1815 and 1827; and by several pamphlets published about the year 1814, in reference to the investigation of the York Asylum: more especially by a history of that asylum written by Mr. J. Gray. These different documents comprise instances, very much detailed, of asylums under every species of superintendence; and there is no system of superintendence under which a most highly objectionable state of things is not

to be found. The superintendence of magistrates is least seen in its practical effects; but there is every reason to believe, both from the nature of the houses where it is instituted, private houses kept for gain, and from the unfrequency of visitation, that it must be much less efficient than that of ordinary governors.

In the Fourth Chapter I have aimed at showing, that the state in which various places of reception were described to be in the preceding one, arose from no accidental, temporary, or local cause; but was permanently inherent in the very nature of the visitation itself.

The Fifth Chapter proposes a system of visitation apparently complex, but, I trust, when well considered, of both easy and efficient operation. It is, in fact, a system of visitation upon visitation; and when the visitor is not himself to be visited, we may surely foresee an early relaxation of his efforts.

The concluding Chapter contains observations on the sort of parliamentary visitation proposed by the committee of 1827.

CHAP. II.

Of the different species of visitation.

THOUGH the visitation of receptacles for the insane in this country has been long established, its importance has been little considered, and its influence little felt. The hospitals of Bethlem and St. Luke's have been directed by governors, sometimes acting in a body, but more generally by committees. At Bethlem a committee is held weekly, for the purpose of communication with the officers of the house, as to the admission of patients, and other matters; and once a month the committee professes personally to visit the whole establishment. The number of governors appears, from Mr. Bowen's pamphlet*, to be forty-two, but how they are appointed he does not say; and to ascertain who they are appears a matter of such difficulty, that a guinea became a common *douceur* for a copy of the list, and in one case five guineas were refused.

* Historical Account of Bethlem, p. 9.

The York Lunatic Asylum, at the period of the important changes of 1814, was under the authority of all subscribers of £20. or upwards. An annual meeting of the governors was held at the summer-races; there were four quarterly courts; and, on any emergency, special courts might be called.

In all the above institutions, the government being in the hands either of persons elected into office, or of contributors to a considerable amount, bore a character of high respectability.

The statute of the 14th year of George the Third* created a new species of visitation. It compelled all houses for the reception of more than one patient, public hospitals excepted, to be licensed: in London and its vicinity, by commissioners appointed by the college of physicians: in other parts of England, by the magistrates in quarter sessions. Three commissioners were annually, or oftener, to visit in the former district; a magistrate and a physician elsewhere, as often as it was deemed necessary.

The amended statute of 1808†, which authorizes the erection of county asylums, for parish paupers, directs that such a number of magistrates as the case requires, shall annually be appointed visitors of the institution.

* 14 G. III. ch. 49.

† 48 G. III. ch. 96.

In all the above cases, visitation is confined to magistrates, commissioners appointed by the college of physicians, or to governors of public hospitals. But in some few hospitals, a species of visitation is directed, which has no connexion with their general government. In the Retreat, near York, the visitors may be appointed from the Society of Friends at large ; and, by the present rules of the York Asylum, the female visitors are chosen without reference to subscription, or subscribers' families. The naval part of the institution at Hoxton appears, independent of the ordinary visitation of commissioners, to be visited by the inspector of naval hospitals ; but this species of superintendence seems much to resemble that of parish officers, who, from time to time, go to view the situation of their paupers ; or that of a relation enquiring into a patient's health.

CHAP. III.

Elucidation, by facts, of the practical influence of each species of visitation. Visitation by governors.

SECTION I.—OF THE YORK LUNATIC ASYLUM.

THIS establishment, founded in 1772, was opened for patients in 1777. It had originally an annual meeting of governors, with unlimited power over its concerns; and half-yearly, and subsequently quarterly meetings, for ordinary purposes. Afterwards a committee of seven was appointed, as were also visitors. The committees and visitors gradually fell into disuse; and from 1795 to the period of the new system of management in 1814, became obsolete.

Not many years after the asylum was well established, a difference of opinion arose amongst the governors, respecting the advantages to be allowed to pauper patients. Whilst the dispute continued, the different courts were well attended; but at last the friends of Dr. Hunter having obtained a most decided preponderance in the insti-

tution, all opposition to their views were withdrawn, a state of general inactivity succeeded, and the meetings of the governors were little more than matters of form. They are thus described, and, as was allowed, fairly, in a pamphlet published during the progress of the reform of 1814: "At the quarterly meetings, four or five governors, with difficulty collected, summed up the items of a tradesman's bill, contracted with the butcher for the ensuing three months, ordered a wall to be pulled down or a door to be blocked up, wished each other a good morning, and retired. At the annual meetings little more occurred: whether the institution was in debt or in credit, how many patients had been admitted and how many discharged, were the usual limits of enquiry *." "I do not charge," continues the writer, "this conduct to hardness or apathy on the part of the governors. They did nothing, because they believed there was nothing to be done†."

At the annual August meeting, some persons of the highest rank, and many country gentlemen, usually attended; with these were mingled several most respectable individuals from the vicinity; and the state of the asylum was constantly praised, because it was honestly believed to deserve praising.

* Vindication of Mr. Higgins, p. 7.

† Ib. p. 8.

Towards the close of 1813, a case of alleged misconduct, brought forwards by Mr. Higgins, a magistrate of the West Riding of Yorkshire, attracted an unusual body of governors to the quarterly court. Twenty-seven were present, forming, apparently, a meeting entitled to the highest confidence and credit.

“ Mr. Higgins’s statement was read ; after which the accused servants of the house were called in and *sworn*. They denied, upon oath, the truth of the charges. No other evidence was called for ; nor was any minute committed to writing of what had been sworn by the servants*.

The following resolution was passed: “ The governors having taken into their consideration the statement published in the York and other newspapers, respecting the treatment of William Vicars, lately a patient in this asylum, and having examined, upon oath, such witnesses as were competent to afford information on the same, are unanimously of opinion, that during the time that the said William Vicars remained in the asylum, he was treated with all possible care, attention, and humanity †.”

This opinion, of gentlemen who, on any other occasion, would have been listened to with ready acquiescence, on the present produced nothing but

* History of the York Lunatic Asylum, by J. Gray, p. 31.

† Ib.

dissatisfaction. Thirteen new governors appeared at the adjourned quarterly court. New cases of alleged misconduct were produced; a general enquiry was instituted; and in the result, that system which had for years been the object of repeated approbation, was wholly overturned; and this too, not by any party newly intervening, but with the active and very useful co-operation of the old governors, as they were named, themselves. Every domestic officer and keeper, including those whose "all possible care, attention, and humanity" had, in Vicar's case, been eulogized, was removed; the number of keepers was greatly increased; alterations and additions, most important in their nature and extent, were made in the house and airing courts; committees and visitors were brought into a state of active superintendence; in a word, measures entirely revolutionary* were established, in many cases by unanimous votes. Here then we have a system, for years superintended by a gentleman, not only of superior medical abilities, but highly valued in private life; a system regularly approved by governors preeminently respectable, dissolved in a moment when reached by full and free enquiry. In this there was nothing local, nothing accidental, nothing attributable to individual character; all was in the regular course of human institutions. And though many institu-

* Mr. J. Gray, p. 79.

tions, framed as this at York was prior to what may be called its dissolution, may exist long, and bear an imposing front, there is not one which is not internally hollow, and in its nature perishable.

SECTION II.—BETHLEM HOSPITAL.

I have adverted, in the first instance, to the York Asylum, not from the peculiar importance of its case; but in part because it preceded the others I shall speak of; and still more, because, after the delineation of Bethlem, the York case would have lost all power to attract attention. It would be most injurious to the former institution to call the cases similar; but both institutions exhibit the same system of government: that system had in both the same tendency; the nature of the evil was in both the same, the degree only different.

Bethlem Hospital was visited on the 2d of May, 1814. I take the account of what was seen there from the Parliamentary Report of the ensuing year*.

“At this visit, attended by the steward of the hospital, and also by a female keeper, we first proceeded to visit the women’s galleries. One of the side-rooms contained about ten patients, each

* Report, 8vo. Baldwin, p. 45.

chained by one arm or leg to the wall ; the chain allowing them merely to stand up by the bench or form fixed to the wall, or to sit down again. The nakedness of each patient was covered by a blanket-gown only. The blanket-gown is a blanket formed something like a dressing-gown, with nothing to fasten it with in front. This constitutes the whole covering. The feet even were naked. One female in this side-room, thus chained, was an object remarkably striking. She mentioned her maiden and married names, and stated that she had been a teacher of languages. The keepers described her as a very accomplished lady, mistress of many languages, and corroborated her account of herself. The committee can hardly imagine a human being in a more degraded and brutalizing situation, than that in which I found this female, who held a coherent conversation with us, and was, of course, fully sensible of the mental and bodily condition of those wretched beings, who, equally without clothing, were closely chained to the same wall with herself. Unaware of the necessities of nature, some of them, though they contained life, appeared totally inanimate and unconscious of existence. The few minutes which we passed with this lady, did not permit us to form a judgment of the degree of restraint to which she ought to be subject ; but I unhesitatingly affirm, that her confinement with patients in whom she was compelled to witness the most disgusting

ideotcy, and the most terrifying distraction of the human intellect, was injudicious and improper. She entreated to be allowed pencil and paper, for the purpose of amusing herself with drawing, which were given to her by one of the gentlemen with me. Many of these unfortunate women were locked up in their cells naked and chained on straw, with only one blanket for a covering. One, who was in that state by way of punishment, the keeper described as the most dissatisfied patient in the house. She talked coherently, complained of the want of tea and sugar; and lamented that her friends, whom she stated to be respectable people, neither came to see her nor supplied her with little necessary comforts. The patients generally complained much of being deprived of tea and sugar. On leaving the gallery, we enquired of them whether the visit had been inconvenient or unpleasant. They all joined in saying, No; but, which was sufficiently apparent, that the visit of a friend was always pleasant.

“ In the men’s wing, in the side-room, six patients were chained close to the wall; five handcuffed, and one locked to the wall by the right arm, as well as by the right leg: he was very noisy. All were naked, except as to the blanket-gown, or a small rug on the shoulders, and without shoes. One complained much of the coldness of his feet. One of us felt them: they were very cold. The patients in this room, except the

noisy one, and the poor lad with cold feet, who was lucid when we saw him, were dreadful ideots. Their nakedness, and their mode of confinement, gave this room the complete appearance of a dog-kennel. From the patients not being classed, some appear objects of resentment to the others. We saw a quiet, civil man, a soldier, a native of Poland, brutally attacked by another soldier, who, we were informed by the keepers, always singled out the Pole as an object of resentment. They saw there was no means of separating these men, except by locking one up in solitary confinement. Whilst looking at some of the bed-lying patients, a man arose, naked, from his bed, and had deliberately and quietly walked a few paces from his cell-door along the gallery. He was instantly seized by the keepers, thrown into his bed, and leg-locked, without enquiry or observation. Chains were universally substituted for the strait-waistcoat. In the men's wing were about 75 or 76 patients, with two keepers and an assistant; and about the same number of patients on the women's side. The patients were in no way distinguished from each other as to disease, than as those who were not walking about or chained in the side-rooms were lying, stark naked, upon straw, on their bedsteads, each in a separate cell, with a single blanket or rug, in which the patient usually lay huddled up, as if impatient of cold, and generally chained to the bed-place in the shape of a

trough. About one-fifth* were in this state, or chained in the side-rooms. It appeared that the wet patients, and all who were inclined to lie abed, were allowed to do so, from being less troublesome in that state than when up and dressed. In one of the cells on the lower gallery, we saw William Norris. He stated himself to be fifty-five years of age, and that he had been confined about fourteen years; that, in consequence of attempting to defend himself from what he conceived to be the improper treatment of his keeper, he was fastened by a long chain, which, passing through a partition, enabled the keeper, by going into the next cell, to draw him close to the wall at pleasure; that, to prevent this, Norris muffled the chain with straw, so as to hinder its passing through the wall; that he afterwards was confined in the manner we saw him; namely, *a stout iron ring was rivetted round his neck*, from which a short chain passed to a ring made to slide upwards or downwards on an upright massive iron bar, more than six feet high, inserted into the wall. Round his body a strong iron bar, about two inches wide,

* In the York Asylum, (*see Annual Report, 1824*.) the number of patients under restraint, including every species, however slight, is about five in the hundred. In some of the houses mentioned in the parliamentary evidence of 1815 and 1827, the proportion is said to be still less.

was rivetted ; on each side the bar was a circular projection, which being fastened to and enclosing each of his arms, pinioned them close to his sides. This waist-bar was secured by two similar bars, which, passing over his shoulders, were rivetted to the waist-bar both before and behind. The iron ring round his neck was connected to the bars on his shoulders by a double link. From each of these bars another short chain passed to the ring on the upright iron bar. We were informed he was enabled to raise himself, so as to stand against the wall, on the pillow of his bed in the trough-bed in which he lay. But it is impossible for him to advance from the wall in which the iron bar is soldered, on account of the shortness of his chains, which were only twelve inches long. It was, I conceive, equally out of his power to repose in any other position than on his back, the projections which on each side of the waist-bar enclosed his arms, rendering it impossible for him to lie on his side, even if the length of the chains from his neck and shoulders would permit it. His right leg was chained to the trough, in which he had remained, thus encaged and chained, more than twelve years. To prove the unnecessary restraint inflicted on this unfortunate man, he informed us he had, for some years, been able to withdraw his arms from the manacles which encompassed them. He then withdrew one of them ; and observing an expression of surprise, he said, that when his arms

were withdrawn, he was compelled to rest them on the edges of the circular projections, which was more painful than keeping them within. His position, we were informed, was mostly lying down; and that, as it was inconvenient to raise himself and stand upright, he very seldom did so: that he read a great deal of books of all kinds, history, lives, or any thing that the keepers could get him; the newspaper every day; and conversed perfectly coherent on the passing topics and events of the war, in which he felt particular interest. On each day that we saw him, he discoursed coolly, and gave rational and deliberate answers to the different questions put to him. The whole of this statement, relative to William Norris, was confirmed by the keepers.

“ On Wednesday, the 7th of June, when we again visited Bethlem, we discovered that all the male patients who were then naked and chained to their beds in the cells, were in that situation by way of punishment for misbehaviour, and not from disease. In consequence of the discovery made by the gentleman who went with me, and myself, of the situation of William Norris, and of a drawing which we procured to be made of him in his irons, he was visited by the following gentlemen: George Holme Sumner, Esq. M. P. the Honourable Henry Grey Bennet, M. P. R. J. Lambton, Esq. M. P. Thomas Thompson, Esq. M. P. and other

members of the house of commons; and I have now to state, that at this last visit I observed that the whole of the irons had been removed from Norris's body; and that the length of chain from his neck, which was only twelve inches, had been doubled.

"I was at Bethlem on Saturday week, the 23d of April*, and found that the old steward, Mr. Alvoine, no longer held the office; and that a new steward, Mr. Wallet, was filling his situation. Mr. Wallet sent for an official governor, Mr. Deputy Greenaway, of Bishopsgate-street, to attend me; and although the number of patients was nearly the same as during the last year, I found but one single one chained to his bed, and not a single patient in any one of the side-rooms, chained to the wall. Mrs. Fenwick, the teacher of languages to whom I have referred, was walking about the gallery, who, Mr. Wallet told me, was an entirely different creature, since she had been treated like a human being.

"Mr. Deputy Greenaway stated, that a great reformation had taken place in the hospital lately, very much in consequence of a speech that Lord Robert Seymour had made in parliament; and that so far from the inspection which took place last year having done any harm, he was satisfied that the hospital had been essentially served. I asked

* 1825. The former visits were in 1824.

Mr. Alvoine, who were the governors. He said it was more than his place was worth to tell."

This statement was met by no counter evidence ; was confirmed by several members, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Smith, Mr. Western ; and is repeated, as to the mode of confining Norris, in the Report of the Bethlem Committee *.

Such a situation of things was not to be concealed, or to be received with indifference by the public. Opinion soon ran so high against the hospital, that a select committee of its governors met on the 24th of June, 1814, "for the purpose of enquiring into the management of the hospital, and the general health of the patients †." This committee consisted of the president, treasurer, three noblemen, three members of parliament, and eleven other gentlemen ; and was, beyond doubt, of the first respectability. The committee "examined the physician, apothecary, steward, and keepers of the hospital ; and also received the information of such of the governors as have been, for many years past, in the habit of attending the weekly committees, and also of going over the hospital and viewing the state of the patients ‡" But the committee does not appear to have examined any person who was, or had been, a patient in the house ; or any of the gentlemen who had visited it ; or any person conversant in

* Evidence, p. 133 to 139. † Appendix, No. 3. ‡ Ib.

the management of insane patients, and unconnected with the establishment.

The Report, which was signed unanimously by the above gentlemen, comprises the following passages: "With respect to the general charge of cruelty and bad management, this committee is of opinion, on the fullest consideration, that no foundation whatever exists for such a charge; that, in the opinion of this committee, every attention has, on the contrary, been paid in the hospital to the cleanliness, the health, and the comfort of the patients confined therein; and that every degree of indulgence, consistent with the security of the patients and the safety of those employed, has been observed." After a description of Norris's restraint, which appears quite accurate, the Report proceeds: "This committee is of opinion that the peculiar nature of the case before them did justify its application, in this particular instance; and that so far from having been attended with the effects which have been attributed to it, it appears to have been, upon the whole, rather a merciful and humane, than a rigorous and severe imposition."

Do we not, from the example of York Asylum and of Bethlem, see the evils necessarily incident to the ordinary routine of a close system of government? At York, the forms of visitation are regularly gone through, and that by persons eminently respectable. At Bethlem, the same proceeding takes place. At York, a charge is laid

against the institution: so it is in Bethlem. Governors meet in each place to enquire. The enquiry is instinctively carried on in each place on the same principles. Each committee enquires where no truth was to be found; and enquires with that *esprit de corps*, that disposition to self-satisfaction and applause, by which men acting together are animated. An indignant vindication takes place in both cases. In both, the vindication is scouted by the public. Genuine enquiry in both cases follows. In the one institution, universal mismanagement is found to have prevailed: in the other, scenes shocking to humanity are exhibited. That really efficient visitor, the voice of the public, is no sooner heard, than one of the institutions is thoroughly regenerated: the other has lost all its horrors.

One very ingenious mode of defence is adopted in the Bethlem committee's report. The imputation of undue rigour is attributed to the admission of incurable patients. "No fewer than one half of the patients, both male and female, at present in the hospital, are incurable patients; and, consequently, have been received as dangerous patients, and so in the main continue*." By what happy chance or skill were the incurable patients of June 23d, 1814, all, save one, *cured* on the 23d April, 1815; when the one remaining

* Appendix, p. 378.

uncured was alone found in chains? Clearly it was public opinion which effected this most sudden and wonderful recovery.

The apothecary is asked *, “What constitutes what you call an incurable case?” “After a residence of twelve months, if such person has exhibited symptoms of malevolence, or is mischievous, and it is considered necessary that society should be delivered from them, they are declared incurable. I think it is not more than two months that this notice has been communicated to us, as medical men; (the notice not to admit incurables.) The hospital receives no more incurables.”

But the hospital did not discharge the incurables already in it. The whole of the reasoning on this subject is fallacious, grounded on the improper use of the word incurable. The whole amounts to this: If at the end of a year a patient is not fit to go at large, we retain him, and *call him* incurable. Is not this, except the improper use of the word, what takes place in nearly every other receptacle? Of two hundred patients in an asylum, one hundred of which were in their first year of residence, and one hundred of longer standing, I much doubt whether the one hundred incurables would not form the quieter division; that

* Appendix, p. 123.

is, (I believe,) there is greater violence at an early period of the disorder.

Norris's case is too important to be lightly dismissed. It is fair to presume him a most violent and dangerous patient. But was the iron casing actually used ever necessary, and how long did it continue so? Nearly every person experienced on the subject, is asked by the committee of the house of commons, if he ever heard of a similar mode of confinement, or of a case where such confinement was requisite? The answer is uniform: "Never." "Would a strait waistcoat have sufficed?" "Not a common one, certainly." But the apothecary is asked *, "Do you mean to say that a strait waistcoat could not have been made of sufficient strength to have prevented Norris from extricating himself from it?" "That is a question," replies the apothecary, "I cannot answer." "Do you believe that a strait waistcoat might not have been easily constructed, of so much strength as that Norris could not have burst it open?" "I cannot tell."

It is obvious that no experiment of less severe restraint was made or thought of, unless it be true, which Norris asserts and the apothecary professes to know nothing of †, that Norris was originally chained by the waist, and that the chain passing through a hole in the wall, he could

* Evidence, p. 86.

† Minutes, p. 86.

be drawn to the wall at any time when a keeper entered his cell ; so that all danger of his attacking the keeper would have been avoided. Norris says he muffled the chain so that it could not be drawn through the hole ; but a little enlargement of the hole would have afforded means of destroying the muffle. I feel no doubt that either a strait waistcoat, of firm materials, or the chain alluded to, would very readily have been made to answer. If two cells could not be spared, the division of one into two parts was an obvious substitute. But were we even to accede to the sort of restraint actually adopted, it is most clear, all the body-iron, both the shoulder-irons, both the arm-irons, and the chains between the shoulder-irons and the collar, were superfluous. Without any of these, Norris was fastened by the throat and by the foot. What ability of mischief remained ? In fact, as for several years he could withdraw his arms from the arm-rings, the whole of the body apparatus was without any effect, but that of annoyance. From this needless accessional restraint, and from the shortness of his neck-chain, he could not recline on either side : a most wanton aggravation of the horrors of his state.

In the nine years of his enchainment, no substitution of any other restraint was once attempted, nor any alleviation of this restraint thought of. The irons “ were never taken off, I believe.” “ Did you, during that period, ever make a second

attempt to have Norris confined in a different manner?" "No." "Were you then satisfied with that mode of confinement, for that period of time?" "Yes*."

Let us hear how Norris was treated before he became in the state which called for such restraint. "Do † you know whether one of those men who usually attended upon him was, or was not, much given to liquor?" "Edward Davis was certainly occasionally intoxicated. His drinking was frequent, but I cannot say his intoxication was constant." "Was it frequent?" "I think I may say that it was." "Was not this the keeper who represented Norris as having taken the shovel from him, and attacked him with it?" "That was the man?" "Do you know that Davis was not drunk at that time?" "He seemed tolerably sober when he came down to me with his head bruised. I do not think he was drunk at the time." "Will you say he was sober, to your belief?" "It is a difficult question." "Do you think that the habits of this man were such as to render him a proper attendant upon irritable maniacs?" "He was a very good kind of man when he was sober." "Do you think that the habits of this man were such as to render him a proper attendant upon irritable maniacs?" "Taking him upon the whole, he was a good

* Minutes, p. 91.

† Ib. 95.

keeper." "Do you think that the habits of this man were such as to render him a proper attendant upon irritable maniacs?" "I do not think that any intemperate man ought to be suffered to be about the insane." "Was this an intemperate man?" "The quantum of his intemperance I do not know." "How long was this man retained in his situation as a keeper, when his habits were such as have been described?" "He remained till he died." "Had he the care of Norris long?" "I think he had the care of him for several years."

Davis was not the only drunken man about the house.

"Do you remember the case about which Mr. Crowther, who was the surgeon of the hospital, made some observations, as to the cause of his death?" "I do*." (The party interrogated in this, and the preceding pages, was the apothecary of Bethlem, in 1815.) "Do you know what these observations were?" "Knowing the situation of Mr. Crowther at that time, I paid no attention to it. Mr. Crowther was generally insane, and mostly drunk. He was so insane as to have a strait-waistcoat. He was surgeon when I came there." "How long did he continue so, after he was in a situation to be generally insane, and mostly drunk?" "I think the period of his

* Minutes, p. 127.

insanity was about ten years ago?" "And the period of his drunkenness?" "He always took too much wine." "How long is it since he died?" "Perhaps a month ago." "Then for ten years Mr. Crowther was surgeon to the hospital; during those ten years he was generally insane; he had had a strait-waistcoat; and was mostly drunk?" "He was." "Did he attend the patients?" "Yes, he did." "Did he attend the patients as surgeon?" "Yes, till a week before his death." "Were the governors of the hospital acquainted with the fact of his incapacity?" "I should think not. His insanity was confined principally to the abuse of his best friends. He was so insane, that his hand was not obedient to his will."

SECTION III.—ST. LUKE'S.

Mr. Wakefield and Mr. Smith were examined by the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1815, as to the state of St. Luke's; as were also the master, the surgeon, and the physician. The evidence is by no means unfavourable to the management of the house. Whether its superiority at that time over Bethlem be referable to the abilities and attention of the master, Mr. Dunstan, or to the mode of visitation, or to both, does not certainly appear. Mr. Dunstan appeared to Mr. Wakefield, a

very competent judge, to conduct the house “ with great care and discrimination *.” When such is the character of the superintendent, a house will do well without any intervention of governors or visitors at all; and scarcely any visitation can be so injudicious as to make it do ill. A house, however, dependent for its state on the character of the officer of the time being, is in no trustworthy condition. A few years must, a few weeks may, put all to hazard. One of the very best institutions in this or any other kingdom, a county asylum too, is under the nearly uncontrolled management of a resident superintendent and his wife: persons, both combining the requisites of their situation in a degree nearly unequalled. But let a few years, it may be a few weeks, pass; conceive these preeminently excellent superintendents removed, and what will be the state of the asylum? The example of unrestrained confidence given by the magistrates, in the first instance, on sufficient grounds, will be continued, in the second instance, because it was given in the first: because habits of confidence, most injurious in their result, are formed; and because the power of vigilant control, from never having been exercised, will never have been attained.

Mr. Dunstan is asked, “ Under whose inspection

* Minutes, p. 163.

is the hospital of St. Luke's*?" "There is a committee of thirty governors." "How often do they visit, and in what number?" "Some of them come always weekly, and sometimes twice a week." "How many?" "From two to four, every Friday, and sometimes half a dozen; and *some of them on other days.*"

This at least looks like vigilant attention; and I am by no means sure that the sort of visitation meant to be described, is not exempt from the mischiefs inherent in the two preceding cases of York and Bethlem. I think, however, the limitation of the governors to thirty must have an extremely bad tendency; but I will not say it implies a closeness of system necessarily injurious, or that it cannot be really efficient.

Let us for a moment turn to Bethlem. Twelve years† after the above proceedings, the *then* apothecary of Bethlem is asked, "Are you in the habit of using much restraint with regard to patients?" And he answers: "Very little indeed. The report for the last week was, that seven individuals had been, more or less, under restraint." "Out of what number?" "One hundred and ninety-five." "Do you mean that you are not in the habit of restraining more than that number, even at night." "I state all the restraint used."

Now, twelve years before we should have had,

* Minutes, p. 171.

† Minutes, &c. 1827, p. 53.

under the full measure of "indulgence" then dealt out to them, thirty-nine patients in nakedness or clothed with a blanket, in chains, pinned to a wall, or chained down to a heap of straw! My favourable opinion of the visitation of St. Luke's is grounded on this; that it consisted, as it ought, in some measure, in the usual visitation of committees; but that, *beyond this*, it enjoyed the more important visitation of individuals interested in the well-being of the patients, from time to time, singly, and simply for the purposes of investigating the state of the house.

SECTION IV.—ELUCIDATION, BY FACTS, OF THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF EACH SPECIES OF VISITATION.—VISITATION BY COMMISSIONERS.—WHITE HOUSE AT BETHNAL-GREEN.

I bring forward this case with some regret; as, though many objectionable matters are contained in it, on the whole, the White House is rather above than below the average of receptacles near London; and the evils that do exist are not designed or wilful, at least as far as the proprietor is concerned, but secondary and incidental. The White House is one of several kept by the same proprietor, and it is superintended by an agent. Every mad-house kept for gain is a

trading speculation ; but a house with a non-resident proprietor will experience all the evils of a trading system, without alleviation or counteraction. A man who resides with his patients has them perpetually before him, in his mind's eye. Whatever feeling he has, must be influenced in their favour. His pride will be concerned to show that *his* house, under *his* care, shall do him credit in the eyes of a visitor. His own domestic comforts too, will be affected by the decency of the arrangements on all sides surrounding him. It is not to be pretended that all these things combined, form a sufficient control on an avaricious or coarse mind ; but they must have their weight. A hired superintendent, whatever of good dispositions there may be in him, must keep one thing steadily in mind : the outlay he must make as small as possible, the income as large. On this depends, certainly, the amount of his own salary ; and, probably, the continuance of his office.

The house in question has been twenty-seven years in the management of its present proprietor. Whether it were licensed before that time, does not appear ; but if twenty-seven years of visitation by the College Commissioners has left this house in the condition detailed, at very great length, before the Committee of the House of Commons, the necessary inference is, that in this case, at least, such visitation has been found

entirely inefficient. Has the visitation exhibited more efficacy elsewhere ?

In the next section I shall consider the state of the Naval Lunatic Asylum at Hoxton ; and, in the one subsequent, produce extracts from the commissioners' visiting-books. That the visitation, if not wholly inoperative, produces a very trivial effect, is the common result of every case we have to consider.

The White House has been far too much crowded. It has possessed no power of separation ; the most violent and dirty patients mingling, to a great extent, with the others. The number of keepers has been wholly unequal, even to the superintendence of the work of the house and care of the patients, supposing it proper to have employed the convalescent patients to a considerable extent. An infirmary, concealed from ordinary visitation or access, has been usually in a most offensive state. A considerable proportion of patients has been constantly chained in cribs, from Saturday afternoon about four, till seven or eight o'clock on Monday morning.

The first charge, that of far too extended admissions, is so clearly allowed, that reference to authority is needless. This seems to have been generally mentioned by the commissioners. Some patients have been thereon removed to another house of the same proprietor ; their places have been presently filled up ; and the next visitation

has found the house as it was the last. And thus the regular routine has gone on, of remonstrance, removal, and fresh admissions.

The alleged reason of these excessive numbers, in 1815, was, that the state of Bethlem had thrown many lunatics on the private houses; that the evil was temporary; but that, if it should be found that these extraordinary numbers continued, proper provisions should be made. I see no validity in this, though some speciousness. The numbers which Bethlem could not receive, would have made no perceptible difference if divided amongst the various houses of reception in the neighbourhood of London. No one house had a right to take more than its due proportion of the whole number. The White House was peculiarly crowded; and the real reason of this was, that supernumerary patients are by far the most beneficial. If an establishment is formed for one hundred and fifty patients, and if two hundred are admitted, the extra fifty will produce more emolument than the prior one hundred and fifty; such extra patients creating little expense beyond the price of their food.

The want of separation in the White House admits of no doubt.

The following extract* states what is said by

* Minutes, p. 85, 86.

the superintendent on this subject. To a person unacquainted with the plan of the house, it is somewhat obscure. The result, however, seems to be this; that there is one airing court for all the male patients, who have amounted to as many as one hundred and seventy. The number at the period of examination was considerably less, under a hundred, it is said; and that the existing investigation should have so reduced the number, might well be expected. For these patients there are three rooms: in one, the most violent are placed; but there is nothing to prevent communication between one room and another; so that, with the exception of those chained to a wall, or the floor, any patient may be in any room. It is said, in case of improper mixture, a servant would take an intruder back into his own room; but the number of servants was quite unequal to such vigilance; and where there was so little regard for due separation, as to leave the court and the rooms, as far as being open goes, common to all, very little attention could be expected from two or three overworked servants, as to restricting the patients from following their own humours.

“How many rooms have you in your house?”
 “Three for male pauper-patients.” “Is there any one room in your establishment, of the day-rooms, entirely confined to violent patients, and into which room no convalescent patient is permitted to enter?” “No; because, though there

is one room the further side of the ground, and the most violent patients are put there, still the convalescent patients can go in if they think proper.”

“Then there is no classification in your day-rooms?” “Not shut up completely.” “Is there any one of those three rooms into which no violent patient is permitted to enter?” “No.”

“Are all the violent ones kept there?” (over N^o 7.)

“Yes, as well as we can; but if we merely confine them in their hands, they frequently walk out. We don’t always keep the patients confined to the floor in the room.” “In point of fact, there is no classification?” “We have no room for shutting the patients in when in a violent state.”

“You say they are not permitted to stop: what is to prevent them?” “The servant would take them back to their own rooms.” “Have you an infirmary for the sick male patients besides?”

“Yes; one for the men, and the other for the women.” “Have you any means for separating an outrageous patient from a quiet one, supposing he is sick?” “No; we have no classification in the infirmary: we have a sitting-room in the infirmary.” “How many yards have you for the pauper-patients?” “Two; one is for the male, and the other for the female.”

A very strong attempt was made to persuade the Committee of the House of Commons that the ordinary number of male keepers for these

paupers, amounting at one period to one hundred and seventy, was five; but it is quite clear there were only two permanent keepers, Dolby and Barnard, with an occasional assistant; as Sharp, who, going with the intention of being groom, remained nine weeks as assistant keeper. On one occasion there appears to have been two assistants. The testimony of the former patients is decisive on this point; but I shall only advert to the testimony of Dolby and Barnard, who still retaining their places when they gave their evidence, could not be expected to speak adversely to the house. Indeed, their disposition to support the system seems predominant through their evidence.

“How long has Essex been with you?” “I think he came about last autumn.” “Before Essex came, whom had you besides Dolby and you?” “There was no other one with us then.” “You had no other regular keeper before last autumn?” “I think either just before or just after.” “Then previous to that period, there was nobody but Dolby and yourself?” “No, not for some time.” “At this time last year, whom had you besides you and Dolby?” “I believe there was no other at that time?” “Then you can give the name of no other regular keeper before last August?” “I do not recollect at this present moment; but I could at one period previous.”

Dolby is asked: “Till within these last

twelve months, had you any body but Barnard to assist you with the pauper-lunatics?" "Yes, we had one or two; but they did not stop long: we have had them backwards and forwards." "Generally speaking, you and Barnard have had the management of all the pauper-lunatics?" "Yes." "You had Sharp to assist you, for a short time." "Yes." "And you had Essex?" "Yes."

I am inclined to think, in a well-conducted house, one keeper sufficient for nearly thirty pauper-patients. That is about the number employed at the Wakefield Asylum, which in this, and nearly every other point, may be considered a model. That very considerable aid ought to be demanded from the pauper-patients, will scarcely be doubted; and that this aid should not extend to the *persons* of patients, seems a somewhat hasty resolution of the committee*. That they should not be employed on any irritating personal office, as chaining, seems very desirable; but a restriction from *all* personal service, seems equally useless and inconvenient.

The infirmary at Bethnal Green very much reminds one of what are called "Higgins's cells" at York. The governors had visited, and visited, and visited, at York, for perhaps as many years as the commissioners had visited at Bethnal Green;

* Resolution, p. 16.

but no cells were discovered at one place, and no infirmary at the other.

Mr. John Hall*, a guardian of the poor of Mary-le-bonne, visited the parish paupers at Bethnal Green. There was delay in bringing down one man, who was said to be in the infirmary. "We became at last a little impatient, and said we would walk to the infirmary. There was a little hesitation in showing us the place; but at last we discovered where it was, and we went up stairs to see this person. They were then endeavouring to bring him down. I gained access, with Mr. Bindwood, into this infirmary; and there we found a considerable number of very disgusting objects: a description of pauper-lunatics, I should conceive chiefly ideots, in a very small room. They were sitting on benches round the room, and several of them were chained to the wall. The air of the room was highly oppressive and offensive; insomuch so, that I could not draw my breath. I was obliged to hold my breath, while I staid to take a very short survey of the room. The room was very offensive, from the excrement and the smell which existed there."

"Do you think that that filth you have referred to †, arose out of a lengthened neglect, or the consequence of merely one day's abstinence from cleaning the room?" "I think it arose

* Minutes, 1827, p. 14.

† Ib. p. 18.

from neglect in cleansing their persons, as well as cleansing the room."

Mr. Goodger, the apothecary for the Mary-le-bonne patients, being asked*, "Have you ever been in the male infirmary?" answers, "Yes, I have been in the male infirmary within these eight months. I did not know it existed till about eight months ago. It was communicated to me by Mr. Bindwood†."

Mr. Dillon, surgeon, St. Pancras. "I was for more than two years attending that institution before I saw the infirmary. An old man named Rutlock was confined, and I wanted to see him. They said he was in the infirmary, and they would bring him to me. I said I would go to him; and, after a good deal of hesitation, I was allowed to go into the infirmary. It was a mere place for dying. In fact, it was not fit for sick persons. That was about three years ago‡." "Was the infirmary, when you were admitted to it, in a disgusting state?" "Certainly so: any thing but fit for the reception of the sick."

Mr. W. S——||, once a patient. "Have you ever been in the infirmary?" "I have been in it once or twice." "Was that in a very bad state?" "It was generally in a very dreadful state, till it

* Minutes, p. 19.

† Who visited with Mr. Hall on the former occasion.

‡ 1824.

|| Minutes, p. 32.

was visited accidentally, or I should rather say, by force, by two gentlemen who came from Mary-le-bonne parish, one afternoon, without giving any notice of their intention. They walked up into the infirmary, and I believe they found it in a very dreadful state."

Colonel Clithero, and one of the gentlemen named above, visited next day; but "as early as five o'clock in the morning this infirmary was whitewashed and cleaned out; new blankets and new coverlids put on the beds; and the place was made to appear comfortable*."

John Nettle, a former patient†. "What sort of state is the infirmary in?" "It was more like a nuisance than any thing else. Indeed, I was very ill once, after cleaning the windows in that infirmary. There was a piece of work made about it, and every thing was cleaned out of that room. About five o'clock one morning, young Mr. Warburton came up; and they got it all clean and comfortable by then the gentlemen came. But it was in such a state that never was seen. I turned the straw out of some of the cribs; and there were maggots at the bottom of them, where the sick men had laid." "They never admitted any body into the infirmary?" "No, never‡."

* Minutes, p. 33.

† Ib. p. 37..

‡ Ib. p. 38.

A physician is called in*. “You are one of the visitors appointed by the College of Physicians?” “I am, for the present year. I have several times been a commissioner.” “Did you ever visit the rooms called the infirmary, at the White House at Bethnal Green?” “I do not know that I have, particularly.” “Then you cannot give any information to the committee, as to the state of that infirmary?” “No, I cannot. Whether I have seen the infirmary or no, I do not know. We make a point of visiting every apartment in the house.”

It will be expected that the foregoing description of the infirmary will be contradicted by the witnesses connected with the house. Dolby says†, that there is no alteration in the infirmary. “It is kept clean, and it always was kept clean.” Barnard is asked‡, “Was not the whitewashing begun rather unexpectedly on that occasion?” (after the discovery of the infirmary.) “No.” “You are quite certain of that?” “Yes.” “Were you ever in the infirmary with Mr. Hall, in August last?” “I was.” “What state was it in at that time?” “It was on a Monday morning: it is always worse on a Monday morning.” “Why is that?” “Because we shave on a Monday morning; and we used to get the straw patients

* Minutes, p. 134. † Ib. p. 173. ‡ Ib. p. 129.

up. And there was one patient who had dirtied himself, in the four-bedded room in the infirmary, who had just been washed; and in the other room there were several bad patients. They had not been cleaned up so clean as they would have been if it had been a little later." "Then the infirmary was very offensive that morning?" "There was a smell coming from that cause; but it was not very offensive." "Do you take upon you to say, that that infirmary is generally as clean as the circumstances will admit?" "Yes."

There is further evidence, both against the infirmary and in its favour. It is for the reader to consider to which party most credit is due. I should suppose the habitual superintendent of this den, would have no very high estimate of the admissible degree of cleanliness; and, if in a decent state, why was this place concealed?

A report* having reached the parish board of St. George's, Hanover-square, that the parish of Mary-le-bonne was about to remove its paupers from the White House, Mr. Roberts is, with others, deputed from St. George's; and requests that every part of the house may be shown him, more particularly the parts objected to by the parish of Mary-le-bonne. Giving an account, on his return, of what he had seen, it is found that some parts had been concealed; and returning unexpectedly, with

* Minutes, p. 29.

persons who knew the house, the *crib* rooms are discovered. "And certainly, at that time," Mr. Roberts says, "they were in a very improper state; that is, over crowded *." "How many of those rooms did you see, that you had never before knowledge of the existence of?" "I think five. A crib-room is a place where there are nothing but cribs, or wooden bedsteads; cases, in fact, filled with straw and covered with a blanket, in which those unfortunate beings are placed at night; and they sleep, most of them, naked in the straw, covered with a blanket. They are used, I believe, exclusively for those patients who are not capable of assisting themselves; and who, of course, do all their occasions in their crib."

Mr. W. S——, formerly a patient. "On the Saturday evenings they were locked down in the same state, (*i. e.* the wet patients in the cribs,) and kept till Monday morning, without being unchained, or allowed to get up to relieve themselves in any way whatever. On the Monday mornings, when they got up, they were, many of them, in a very filthy state; and I have seen them, in the depth of winter, when the snow was on the ground, put into a tub of cold water, and washed down with a mop. I have seen that man brought from the door of the room, and from the heat of the *fæces* that were lying upon him, his

* Minutes, p. 30.

back has been completely bare for many inches up; and he was treated in the same way, by being washed in the way I have stated." "Can you state what is the restraint employed upon those crib patients?" "They were restrained by chains: they were chained by both hands and by both legs, the greater part of them; and they remained in that state the whole of Sunday."

J. N——, a former patient*. "Were you ever put into a crib?" "Yes, I was, seven months." "At what time in the evening were you generally put in there?" "According to the time of the year. We went to bed about three o'clock in the afternoon, and we did not get up till about nine in the morning." "When you were put into one of the cribs, were you fastened down?" "I had my two hands locked in this way, and a large iron round my leg." "Were you ever put in there on a Saturday night, and kept till Monday morning?" "Yes, we were locked down at three o'clock on Saturday night; and there we laid forty-eight hours, and more than that in winter-time, fastened in that way, never loose. We could hardly get our meals: indeed, we had our victuals brought to us." "Were you not unlocked when your victuals were brought to you?" "Certainly not. Some men were locked all-fours: I had only one leg locked;

* Minutes, p. 37.

but some had both legs fastened with a large staple to the crib." "You were perfectly naked?" "Perfectly naked." "You had only the straw and the rug?" "The straw, and only one blanket to cover us." "And you were left in that state, in your own filth, till Monday morning?" "Yes."

Ann Gibbon, a former patient*. "You were the person that gave the information to the parish-officers, relative to the rooms that they had not discovered?" "Yes." "Will you state, generally, what was the condition of that place?" "What I saw was the poor people that were put into the cribs. They were made quite naked, and put into the crib-rooms. They were put to bed about four o'clock on a Saturday evening; and they remained in that state till Monday morning about six, chained down."

Mr. W. S——, formerly a patient†. "Do you believe that the whole of the crib patients were confined during the Sunday?" "There were a few, I believe, that were allowed to get up." "Have you any knowledge as to whether they were taken up and washed on the Sunday morning?" "They were not removed from their cribs, unless the few that were allowed to get up. Those that remained in that state, from the Saturday to the Monday, were never taken up

* Minutes, p. 38.

† Ib. 117.

and washed.” “Do you think they could not be taken up and washed during the time you were absent?” “I am very well aware that it never was the case; because there is one of the rooms that is called No. 7, and those men were always chained the whole of Sunday. They never were allowed to get up; and many of them lay in a very filthy state, which I had a very good opportunity of seeing.” “You have been in the crib-rooms on a Sunday, and have seen them in a very filthy state?” “Many times.” “Was it cold water or warm that they were washed with?” “I have seen warm water used, but generally cold.” “Did you ever see a mop used?” “Yes, many times.” “Have you seen them washed with cold water in the winter?” “I have.” “Do you maintain the assertion that no soap was allowed, during the period you were there, to any patients?” “I do; and only one towel allowed to all the persons that were there during the week.”

The superiors of the institution do not admit the truth of these statements. They probably had little personal knowledge on the subject. Let us hear the two permanent keepers, and the occasional one, Sharp. Barnard* states, that several patients were confined in cribs from Saturday till Monday, persons in a high state of disorder, those that were negligent of the common calls of nature,

* Minutes, p. 125.

and those liable to fits; but he asserts that of those so confined, every one was duly attended to and looked after—that they were washed on the Sundays, or, if very high, cleaned—that their food was regularly given, &c.

The examination goes on thus: “Did you take them out of their cribs and wash them down?” “I do not say that we take them all out, but some we do.” “How many have you ever taken out on a Sunday morning to wash?” “I have taken out several, but I cannot say the number.” “How many crib-patients are there altogether?” “I think it is about thirty.” “Are there forty?” “There are not forty.” “Before last Christmas, when you had not so many keepers as you have now, how many of those have you ever taken out to wash on a Sunday morning? Did you ever take three out?” “Yes, I have: we have taken three out, and more.” “You think then, that out of the thirty or forty crib-patients before last Christmas, you were in the habit of taking two or three out on a Sunday morning?” “We have taken out more than that. But there were some did not require to be taken out.” “Did you ever take five out on a Sunday morning to wash them?” “That I will not be positive of.” “Have you ever had fifty?” “I should think not fifty.” “Upwards of forty?” “Upwards of forty.” “How many of those were chained down

from the Saturday to the Monday?" "All of them were confined on the Sunday, except some few that we get up?" "Have you ever taken up two?" "I am certain I have." Speaking of the washing, he says, warm water was used in cold weather; cold, in hot. A mop was sometimes used: generally, parts of old blankets.

Dolby's testimony* very much corresponds with this of Barnard. He thinks four or five were taken up of a Sunday morning †.

Sharp says, he attended twelve crib-patients. "Were those twelve always confined from Saturday to Monday, when you were in the establishment?" "Yes." "The same persons?" "Yes." "How did you wash them when they were taken up on the Monday morning?" "If they were dirty, we washed them with a mop." "With cold water?" "With cold water." "Did you often use the mop?" "Yes, very often." "Did you ever use hot water?" "No, I never used hot water. I went there in November." "Did you ever see any used?" (hot water.) "I do not recollect that I did." "Did you ever have any flannel given you to wash them with?" "No, never." "Did you ever confine them for the whole day, on any other day besides Sunday?" "Never, in the cribs."

The testimony in favour of cold water, mops,

* Minutes, p. 171.

† Ib. p. 160.

and entire neglect on the Sunday, appears to me greatly to preponderate, not only in numbers, but in probability. Who is it gives the softened account? Persons yet keepers in the house. This revolting system of confinement was obviously adopted, to obtain for the keepers a sort of holiday. The regular attentions which two of the keepers speak to, would have rendered this object unattainable.

Such was the state of the White House, Bethnal Green, at the end of at least twenty-seven years of statute-visitation: it may be, at the end of half a century; as this house may have been in existence, as a mad-house, when the visiting-act was passed. It is not, however, to be overlooked, that when, in June, 1827, the committee sat, five regular keepers were actually attending on a greatly diminished number of patients. It is, therefore, by no means improbable that this may have now become a well-regulated receptacle. The mischiefs we have adverted to, arose from buildings inadequate in size, and keepers inadequate in number. There is nothing of wilful or designed barbarity. But if it *be* now well regulated, whose visitation has produced the change? Unquestionably, the visitation of public opinion, and of the House of Commons' Committee.

SECTION V.—ELUCIDATION, BY FACTS, OF THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF EACH SPECIES OF VISITATION.—
VISITATION BY INSPECTOR OF NAVAL HOSPITALS.—
NAVAL MANIACS AT HOXTON.

Dr. John Weir called.

“In your examination of the place of reception, have you attended to their diet and sleeping?”
“Yes, at every visitation. I see all the patients: their sitting-rooms, bed-chambers, or cabins; their diet, their beds, their body-linen, &c. I look particularly to see that their heads and skin are kept clean, and that attention is paid to their cleanliness and comfort in general.” “Do you make a written report?” “Yes, I do, weekly.” “What is your opinion with respect to the management of the naval officers in that establishment?” “They are very improperly managed, I think. In a ninth bed-room I found three officers, one of whom was totally insensible to the calls of nature, and slept in a double cradle with an officer who was cleanly in his habits. I found three officers in a tenth apartment, containing pauper-patients: a private seaman slept in a double cradle with one of these officers. In a thirteenth, I found two officers; a captain and a surgeon of the navy. The surgeon is uncommonly slovenly in his person; so dirty, indeed, that he was discarded from the officers’ sitting-room. The captain appeared

to me to be in a very critical state of health, much emaciated; and, unless some sudden alteration should take place, he cannot live many months;—the result, I conceive, of confinement and improper management. From the want of such attentions, one is going with his stockings down; another with his breeches unbuttoned; and in this way their clothes are destroyed, without considering what is due to decency and propriety.” “Are the patients who are most violent, mixed with those who are more calm and tranquil?” “Both frantic and mild cases are mixed indiscriminately. One of the patients I found shut up in an apartment on the ground-floor, appropriated to the reception of ten wet patients. The poor object was exceedingly dirty, much emaciated from an affection of the chest, and had a wooden bowl before him with a few dirty potatoes in it; but was without drink, medicine, or an individual creature to give him the smallest assistance. The floor, though apparently clean, was moist, and emitted a stench, so as not only to render it offensive to the senses, but extremely obnoxious to patients in the very vigour of life. The plank was so wet, I could have written upon it. Nine other persons slept in the room. The poor man was perfectly calm and tranquil; but so weak, he could not get out of his bed. The floor was quite red with the effect of the urine.” “In what condition did you find the bed-rooms of the

seamen?" "I found them, as usual, close crowded, unventilated, and evidently hurtful to health; more particularly one of them, intended for the accommodation of ten wet patients. This was also, in respect of stench and moisture, nearly on a similar footing with the one I have already mentioned." "Were the seamen classed according to the frantic or mild forms of the disease?" "Although there are now three sitting-rooms, they are still permitted to mix indiscriminately. Those patients who are in a state of ideotism, and consequently insensible to the calls of nature, are, as well as the dangerous patients who are chained down, confined the whole of the day in the sitting-rooms, with the other patients." "Do you consider the bed-rooms as sufficiently ventilated?" "By no means: it is impossible in so small a space. I have observed, particularly in damp weather, in my visitations, that not only the bed-rooms, but the passage that runs between them, were completely damp. I believe they are washed every morning, and unless the weather is very dry and warm, they are seldom dry till the evening; and in wet winter weather, they are seldom or never dry during the twenty-four hours." "How many officers and seamen have died at Hoxton during the last twelve months?" "Eleven, out of one hundred and thirty-six." "Do you consider eleven deaths out of the officers and seamen, during the above period, a great mortality?" "I do."

“To what cause do you attribute this great mortality?” “Chiefly to the want of due attention being paid to cleanliness, ventilation, and dryness in the different buildings and apartments in which the patients are lodged; and to a neglect of cleanliness in their persons. I have attended, altogether, about thirteen years. I think it has been in a progressive state of improvement ever since I attended it. I found the patients very badly managed at first.

SECTION VI.—NAVAL MANIACS AT HOXTON.—VISITATION
BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE COLLEGE.

The secretary to the commissioners read an extract from their minutes: “These houses (those of which the Hoxton house for naval maniacs is one) are in very excellent order; and the commissioners have the satisfaction to find, that all their suggestions have been completely complied with*.” “Were the quiet patients among the naval maniacs mixed with the turbulent ones?” “I think, to the best of my recollection, not. There is a room sufficiently large for the patients who are in it; and there is a yard in which they walk, of sufficient size. There are separate

* Minutes, p. 249.

rooms, in which violent patients are confined; but certainly I have seen violent patients confined in chains, in the day-room used by other patients.”

“Have you seen dirty patients with the clean?”

“I do not know particularly. They continue, upon the whole, to keep them very clean; and such are usually confined in other rooms.”

“Can you say whether the violent patients are separated from the more placid?”

Whether that is done uniformly I cannot tell. I certainly have, as I said, seen violent patients in the day-rooms.”

“Are there patients insensible to the calls of nature, kept in the same apartments with the clean patients?”

“I do not think there are: certainly not generally. I believe it may have been the case occasionally. I think I have seen patients who might have been passing their urine, for instance, in a day-room with others.”

“How does it (the above extract) consist with the putting together the clean and the unclean, and the quiet and the turbulent?”

“I think a separation is made between them commonly.”

“On your last visitation there, did you observe the room in which a lieutenant of the navy was confined, whether any body was with him or not?”

“It is not within my recollection, at the present moment, to have seen such a patient.”

“Did you observe any room where any officer was confined, where two servants of the house slept in the same room with him?”

“I do not recollect such a fact coming before

me." "Have you any minute of the size of the rooms, and whether the rooms appeared too much crowded with beds?" "No." "Did it fall within the observation of the commissioners, at their last visitation, that persons slept promiscuously in the same room who were insensible to the calls of nature, and those who were not?" "No, it did not, certainly." "Was any enquiry made whether such cases existed or not?" "No, I think I can say certainly not." "Did it fall within your observation that, in this house, two officers were in the same room, one perfectly clean, and the other so dirty as to be excluded from the officers' sitting-room?" "Certainly not within my observation." "Is it an object of examination with the commissioners, whether the sleeping-rooms are of a proper size, considering the number of persons who sleep in them?" "Most unquestionably." "Can you state the size of the rooms?" "No." "Neither the length, breadth, nor height?" "I cannot." "Did you visit (the naval maniacs' house at Hoxton) in 1813?" "Yes, on December 16." "What was the nature of your report?" "Very good and well-regulated house." "Did you visit that house in 1812?" "Yes, on 25th November, 1812." "What was the nature of your report then?" "That it was a well-regulated house."

Two species of visitation have taken place at the same house. Extracts from both, as to the

same points, are above laid before the reader. It is for him to make his inference of comparative value.

Dr. Weir was not a man called in by any official form, or ordinary routine, to sustain the character of visitor; nor for a limited time; nor as an insignificant part of his duties, as something that was indifferent to his future well-being, whether he were negligent in it or active. What *he* said and did, was not imprisoned amongst the musty rolls of a college chest; but was marked, and, though far too slowly, acted on. The choice of Dr. Weir seems eminently good; however, the office of superintendent was not always in such able hands. This, all human institutions must, on occasions, be liable to. But had Dr. Weir's duties not merely brought his proceedings before a comparatively private board; had they been in their nature matters of *public* investigation, no doubt both those who preceded Dr. Weir, and those who were to follow him, would have been in character corresponding to himself.

I mean not the slightest disrespect to the College of Physicians, in any thing I have said, or shall say. Make any where an annual choice of five physicians, of whom three shall form a visiting commission; and I believe the higher the five in talents and reputation, the more unfit they will be for the inferior but useful office of visitor. Making a choice, originally wrong, the statute

places the persons chosen in a situation incapacitating and oppressive. Their visits, for want of funds, and of leisure in the visitors, must be limited to once or twice in the year. Even in the largest establishments, a couple of hours, or at most three, is the utmost allowance of time; and whatever the disposition, there is no power of effectual interference.

CHAP. IV.

Of the influences ordinarily operating on each species of visitation.

SECTION I.—GOVERNORS.

WHERE gentlemen of talents and respectability unite together in any public effort, we at first find great ardour. If there is considerable opposition, the ardour continues, or even increases: when opposition is at an end, and the purpose secured, ardour declines, lukewarmness comes on, and at length something like the frost of apathy is felt. Every man acquainted with the common course of business must have observed this; however, to recal the matter to those whose observation it may have escaped, or whose memory may not retain it, I will mention the common instance of a turnpike road act. When a road is projected, half the country is in arms; some for, some against. Plans, and surveys, and calculations, fill every mind. Meetings are continually held: one party thinks the nation is to be saved by this new road; the other, that it is to be ruined. After a stormy

parliamentary contest, the triumphant party is still, for a considerable time, kept in animated spirits. There are monies to be borrowed, officers to choose, contracts to enter. At last, all is finished, the road is completed, the opposition foiled, and nothing is left but to travel on it at peace. For a year or two this peace is not altogether paralyzing; but probably before half a dozen are over, nobody cares for the road but the clerk, who gets a salary and increase of business by it, and into whose hands the whole management gradually falls. By and by perhaps there is a dispute about gravel, or about diverting the road or widening it; and again vigour and animation predominate.

The track constantly pursued by commissioners and trustees, is the track of governors too; and though their steps may sometimes be retarded, and sometimes hastened, at length they reach the ordinary termination.

Every thing I am describing was seen in the York Asylum*. Persons of very high respectability engaged in the plan with considerable ardour. In six years it was opened. Before the thermometer had fallen to lukewarm, the dispute about paupers occurred; and it immediately arose to summer heat, and ere long was at 98. After a

* To prevent perpetual reference, I will at once recommend the reader to Mr. J. Grey's amusing work, mentioned before.

few years, the party of the physician, Dr. Hunter, finally but decisively prevailing, the glass immediately fell, and remained nearer to frost than to temperate, till the matter of 1813 brought it actually to boiling.

By what degrees the governors of Bethlem arrived at that state of confidence which induced them, under the direction of their officers, to case the unfortunate Norris for nine years in iron, and which, no doubt, would have induced them, had their officers so pleased, to hang him up in an iron cage for that time, does not appear. The state was, in fact, arrived at ; and the causes cannot be doubted.

There are peculiar reasons applicable to the governors of lunatic asylums, which must, at a more than usually early period, detach them from active exertions. The minute inspection and investigation of a receptacle for insane patients, is any thing but attractive : in fact, it is, to many, revolting ; more particularly so to persons of nice feelings, or habituated to the comforts and elegancies of higher stations. Such persons, rather accustomed to accept information from others, than actually to obtain it for themselves, more commonly acting by their stewards, bailiffs, or attorneys, than by personal efforts, will, on no occasions, be more ready to delegate their trust than on such as I am now contemplating. The conduct of the higher members will necessarily give a tone to

that of the inferior : without much activity themselves, they will check the activity of others. The disposition to confide in officers of an establishment thus arising, will be increased by the governor not having that knowledge of the subject which the officer really has. Governors, in general, in a system which may even yet be called new, as little know what can be done, as how to do. Governors also are very naturally satisfied far too soon. Their standard of visitation is fixed much too low. Many have known that, in their early life, some unhappy man, at the house of a friend or relative, was regularly locked up in an attic, deprived of air and exercise, almost of light, and perhaps entirely of liberty. Nothing was more frequent, some years ago, than to see several disgusting objects, with scarce the vestige of humanity remaining, chained to the wall of a work-house yard in summer, and to the floor of some filthy corner of the house in severer weather. And what were the images numberless ballads and stories had impressed on the juvenile mind, as to St. Luke's and Bethlem? An endless gallery, with a long range of narrow and dark cells; in each a patient naked, chained on straw, filling the whole building with yells and screams, and blasphemous imprecations. To minds thus impressed, madness appears with far more than its real horrors; and any thing short of the most

gross misconduct, is considered as an instance of successful and humane management.

In the vicinity of London, as elsewhere, visitors are now far too low in their requisitions. It is common for governors of these institutions to meet on fixed days, and then to walk round the house. This is something like the watchman's night-call, which obligingly gives the robber notice to stay his hand till the round is finished. Another very serious grievance of ordinary visitation is, that it is made by a party who in some measure investigate, in some measure converse; who out of politeness keep together, never going before the head person in company; and, on the whole, saunter along, half in attention, and seeing thoroughly into nothing.

SECTION II.—MEDICAL COMMISSIONERS.

Had I been asked, as a question of theory, Will a selection of five from the College of Physicians form an effectual body of visitation? my answer would have been, I think not: they will too much resemble an ordinary board of governors. Physicians, especially in the metropolis, are more refined than any other professional men: they live much with the higher classes, and adopt their manners. No doubt the physician has

his clinical as well as his drawing-room visits, and must often be introduced to scenes that are offensive to him. Notwithstanding this, he has much nicety of feeling; and no man is more likely to hasten with disgust through the recesses of an asylum. A physician too, strictly speaking, is not a man of business. He traverses innumerable streets in his chariot, enters houses without count, but all is in a regular routine. One visit is like another visit. He has a pulse to feel, a medicine to order, a prescription to write, a nurse to direct, and hastens away to repeat the same scene in the next square.

Let us land our three commissioners, with their attendant secretary, at the door of the White House. Doctor A. insists Dr. B. shall enter first. Dr. B. can't think of it. Whilst they are bowing at each other on the steps, half a dozen manœuvres are practised to screen the patients from view. The apothecary, perhaps, detains them five minutes in the lobby, with some pretty, well-devised story; offers Dr. C. a pinch of his snuff, and accepts the doctor's box in return. At length the stairs are ascended. At the first landing, Dr. B. is asked how Lady Betty goes on; stops to detail her case, and hears Lord John's in return. At last the gallery is attained. The doors all fly open. Dr. A. peeps his head over his shoulder to the right. Dr. B. adopts the same measure to the left. They see nothing wrong, for they scarce

see any thing at all. Meanwhile, Dr. C. and the secretary are conning over some dispute that has arisen at the college.

By the time the three physicians have peeped over a gallery and reached the end of it, what might have been done? Had a master-key of the house been put into the hands of an active lad, the apprentice of an apothecary in his fourth year; had he slipped in, unseen by the keepers, and made good use of his time, ere the four doctors had finished the gallery he would have traversed the whole house, from the garret to the cellar; day-rooms, airing-courts, chains, cribs, infirmaries; all that the doctors ever did see, and all that they were doomed never to get a sight of.

I will not literally insist that the doctors will act precisely thus; but I must insist that this sketch forms a pretty accurate resemblance to the relative success of their visitation.

A year or two, no doubt, would not exhaust the ardour of the physician in his office, had that ardour ever had existence. But the visitation is uncongenial: it is adverse to the physician's feelings, to his habits, to his common course of business: it is an imposed and ungrateful duty. And never let it be forgotten, that as to personal character and credit, it was wholly unimportant when the commissioners visited, or how they visited, or whether they visited or did not visit at all.

The office must, on another account, be especi-

ally unpleasant. It is an office of perpetual censure; and of whom? Either of friends or of friend's friends: of houses of which physicians are owners, which physicians attend, or which belong to those with whom physicians are connected.

The commissioners, like ordinary visitors, appear to me to fix the standard of visitation too low. In 1815, thirty-four houses were licensed in their district. From the general aspect even of their own register, one should think that thirty of the thirty-four houses were subjects of strong observation. One or two were probably in a really good state, and one or two not to be much objected to. It is from this district the medical visitors form their notions of receptacles for the insane. There was something of the better sort to be seen at St. Luke's in 1815, and Bethlem was in an improving state; but neither of those institutions seems to have been much known by the medical profession. The general notion and feeling respecting a lunatic asylum, in the minds of persons habitually conversant with bad specimens, and rarely meeting with any that were good, must have been, that it was a place where great and numerous evils were to be expected; evils that might be palliated, in some measure; but that were, except under peculiar circumstances, and in particular instances, not to be overcome.

A commissioner would somewhat resemble the surveyor of the highways and turnpikes of some portion of a county, where, time immemorial, they had been not much more than merely passable. Should such surveyor see half a dozen streets M'Adamized, or accidentally pass two or three stages of the best portion of the great North Road, he would look on what he saw as rather fantastical specimens of supererogatory niceness, or experiments of costliness beyond use, rather than as what was to be expected or aimed at, in the common system of road-making. Where, on any inspection, he found a few ruts filled up, he would report, "An improving road;" where no accident of breaking down had happened for a twelve-month, "A good road;" and where a post-chaise could get on seven miles an hour, no doubt he would exclaim, with exultation, "An excellent road this!"

SECTION III.—MAGISTRATES.—COUNTY ASYLUMS.

In the ordinary visits of magistrates, a great deal must be found that has already been described; very little information on the subject, very erroneous ideas, very considerable languor, and not rarely very considerable disgust. A to-

lerable exterior of things in the house, a little adroit civility in its owner, a willingness on the part of the justice to finish his job as soon as he can, and an equal willingness in the master that it should be speedily concluded, will get over the business with great ease to all parties; and then, for nearly half a year, there is a reasonable certainty of no further obtrusion.

County asylums stand a somewhat better chance. The Act on which they are founded, directs a competent number of magistrates to be appointed, for the purposes of the building itself, of forming its establishment, and of its future regulations. When five or six gentlemen had, for several successive years, taken an acting interest in bringing an asylum, from its very commencement, into a state of completion and activity, it may be expected they would have attained both knowledge and interest enough on the subject to carry them forward for no inconsiderable period. The subsequent direction of an annual appointment, must prove some counteraction to this hope. In general, however, the same, or nearly the same magistrates, would be chosen. As the proper persons, justices, for conducting a business of this sort, must be selected here and there, several will come from a distance. Their meetings will probably be fixed at certain periodical times: being expected, they will be prepared for. Their own servant, whatever his denomination, steward,

superintendent, governor, chosen by themselves, is almost sure to obtain their implicit confidence—to disarm their vigilance—in fact, to become their master, and to make the institution precisely what *he* chooses it should be, be his choice good, bad, or indifferent.

CHAP. V.

Management of receptacles for lunatics.—Committees.—Special visitors.—Superintendence by statute.

SECTION I.—COMMITTEES.

FAR too little attention is ordinarily paid to a most necessary distinction between management and visitation. Every committee, no doubt, ought to have the right to visit; but there ought to be visitors who have nothing to do with the committee but to report to it. A committee of five or seven ought to sit periodically, and also to be called together on any urgent occasion; and in this committee, the whole power of the institution should be vested, as far as relates to the ordinary course of conducting it. In special courts and periodical courts, the formation of new rules and extraordinary expenditure ought to be placed. The grounds for this separation of management from visitation, are, I should hope, already obvious. A small body of gentlemen, respectable from age, station, and character, can hardly fail to form a

good committee of management, when aided by the activity and vigilance of visitors specially appointed. Good sense, and good disposition towards the establishment, is all that is requisite in a committee, once fairly versed in the business of the institution. The very best committee would not rarely make the very worst visitors; and not seldom the very best visitors, the very worst committee. Committees meet either periodically, or, at least, on notice: the effects of their inspection can generally be guarded against. They visit three, four, or five together. This, we have seen, is every way inefficient. They are too numerous to bear much individual weight of responsibility; and, taken as a whole, as walking through the house once a month is rather a matter incidental to general management, than what is absolutely imposed upon them, if they see little, they will stand excused, at least to themselves; and what is worse, they will have ready excuses, if there is much that they entirely omit to see. A special visitor, whose exclusive duty it is to see whatever is done or left undone, or attempted to be done, to investigate every thing in detail, repeatedly, unexpectedly, and minutely, has a responsibility fixed upon him which must act as a considerable stimulus. He is not like a magistrate, who, visiting perhaps once this year, in all probability the next year visits his own visitation. The ordinary co-visitor may be said to visit the first, perhaps the

same day ; and in a few days, or a few weeks, all that he has neglected is sure to be known to others ; and *that he has neglected*, he can scarcely hope to conceal.

In our great *public* institutions, I do not know that more can be done than has been done, in the formation of committees. What is requisite, is to give them better assistance than confidence in domestic officers will produce.

As to licensed houses out of the London district, committees, no doubt, ought to be formed out of the magistracy of the district ; whether specially appointed, or met in ordinary petty sessions, I will not here stop to enquire ; and the magistrates, like all other committee-men, should have the right of unrestrained visitation.

As to private houses, it is obvious the magistrates cannot form a committee of management ; but they should form a committee to receive the Report of abuses : with what power of acting on the Report, is too difficult a question for present discussion.

Within the limits of the London district, it appears to me that the magistrates should have exactly the same authority as elsewhere. The visitation directed by statute, can never be alone sufficient ; and the magistracy of London and Middlesex can give, at least, as much of the requisite aid to the statute visitation, as any body of justices in the country.

SECTION II.—OF SPECIAL VISITORS.

When the governors of an institution are numerous, and a sufficient portion of them live within a short distance of the asylum, there is no very great need to resort to what may be called foreign visitors ; but when a due succession of proper persons with opportunity of constant superintendence, is not to be found, it would be a most unjustifiable pride in governors to reject the assistance of a respectable choice from the vicinity. Yet I fear the disposition to reject will be strong. “Is *my house* to be encroached on by strangers?” the angry governor will cry. “Are the faults of *my establishment* to be pried into, by I know not whom—some tradesman of the next street? I would as soon permit the visitation of Pamperdown-house itself; as soon lay open my kitchen, my stable, my larder, my cellar, my halls, and my galleries, to the populace of the next market-town!” All that I can say is, that I trust the good sense of the majority will predominate over the feelings which, I am confident, will have existence in not a few. When the qualities that ought to be combined in a visitor are considered, instead of rejecting foreign aid, I think it ought, in *all* cases, to be sedulously resorted to, whenever

such qualities are discovered in even moderate numbers.

In a house brought under good regulation, the business of visitation will be one of prevention rather than of cure ; and a moderate share of humanity and good sense may qualify for useful visitation. But many occasions have arisen, and others doubtless will arise, where evils are to be detected and exposed, and where qualities of no common order will be required.

Could I venture to sketch the *beau ideal* of the visitor of a lunatic asylum on such occasions, I should say, he must have great personal activity and alertness ; he must have reached the garret, whilst he was yet thought to remain in the kitchen ; be in the airing-court before the keeper has locked up the cell he has scarce left. He must have an eye so acute, that half a glance would show him what was wrong ; and sagacity so keen, that before he had half seen what was wrong, his mind should have traced its whole extent. He must have a vigilance and perseverance that nothing can escape : closet, drawer, box, press, must fly open at his approach ; and neither bed, nor blanket, nor straw, nor chains, nor straps, must escape his search. He must *not* be a man of refined niceness ; but firmly endure, both in eye, ear, and nostril, what an ordinary man would shrink from with horror. He should be kind in heart and temper, but not one iota yielding or indecisive.

Though I would not have him passionate, he should be capable of strong and energetic expression.

Such is, in my conception, the *beau ideal* of a visiting governor; and, being such, he should, I think, be caught wherever he can be found.

If the special visitor is necessary in asylums where there are bodies of governors, far more is he necessary in private houses, where there is only one governor, and that governor interested. I believe the proprietor of a private mad-house will have a still stronger objection than the governor of a public one, to this stranger's intrusion. For reasons going far beyond pride, he will struggle against *his* kitchen, *his* larder, *his* courts, and *his* galleries, being inspected and commented on. It is enough to say, the greater the objection to being visited, the more necessary the visitation. As to *who* these subsidiary visitors should be, the point requires consideration. Professional men, and respectable tradesmen, where they possess leisure and inclination, are most likely to prove active and useful in the arduous work of superintendence.

In the houses now under the sole investigation of country magistrates, visitation is, at least, as requisite as where there are numerous governors. With special visitors appointed from the neighbourhood, and with the magistracy sometimes visiting, and, from time to time, receiving the

Reports of such special visitors, the licensed houses in the country will be placed under a most wholesome and useful control; but will still, I think, call for that more public visitation, with a delineation of which I shall close this chapter.

SECTION III.—OF PARLIAMENTARY VISITATION.

There are two reasons why we should not rest satisfied with the government and superintendence of insane receptacles already proposed. 1st. Such is the tendency of all human efforts to relax—of all human ardour to subside, that, without some external stimulus, and that both strong and of frequent repetition, I should have little hope but that all I have suggested would, in time, become a mere formal routine. Some act of inordinate cruelty, some flagrant instance of improper confinement, might at length rouse the public indignation, and renovate the activity of governors, magistrates, and visitors; but a long period of lethargy and misrule might not unlikely precede. The second reason is, that more knowledge, more skill, more useful direction of good dispositions, than the country can speedily procure for itself, is requisite for our insane receptacles in general. Let us consider then what are the qualities which a proposed parliamentary visitation should possess.

To act as a stimulus, the parliamentary visitation should be direct. It is proposed by Dr. Weir, that a board of three, resident, I presume, in London, "should correspond with, and control, every insane institution throughout the kingdom*." This is insufficient. The control by correspondence, at one, two, three hundred miles distance, would be little more than a waste of time and paper. Who could write but the governors and visitors? Whilst their eyes were open, no writing would be needful; and when the period of dozing had arrived, there would be nobody to write. Personal visitation then seems absolutely requisite. Parliamentary visitors should be well skilled in the subject: they should be able, not only to correct positive evils, but to introduce whatever improvements a new system of practice had adopted. The visitors should be entirely disinterested: they should be without either hope or fear, friendship or enmity. The parliamentary visitors, in order that the same stimulus should operate on *their* conduct, which *their* visitation afforded to others, should be, to the greatest possible extent, subject to the control of public opinion.

Nothing but a board established in London, and thence, from time to time, visiting all the institutions in England, could offer the various

* Minutes, 1815, p. 189.

advantages described. They would visit with far more authority than any set of persons from a neighbouring town—with far more independence. Their superintendence of insane receptacles would be the business of their life, their pride, their honour. Hence a very high degree, both of activity and skill, might be expected. Their conduct would be perpetually before the world, and, unquestionably, with all that effect that the publicity of our institutions so extensively receives.

Dr. Weir proposes a commission of three; one to be “an able, active civilian;” the second, of the law; the third, a physician. To “an able, active civilian,” no objection can be made; but an able civilian is not wanted; and an active one, it may be, not to be had. The department of civil law is not of that sort of practice which forms the man of business; having nothing of the oral examination, which should be the great reason for introducing a lawyer into the commission. Certainly, a man habituated to the oral investigation of testimony, would be very important on visitation; and a portion of common-law knowledge would be occasionally useful. Unquestionably, one of the three commissioners should be a physician: whether two, or not, perhaps signifies little. The practice of physic, any more than the practice of civil law, will not give a man that activity necessary to successful visitation. But many physicians, no doubt, are of great natural activity; and in a

situation of great exertion, by others activity may be gained.

Dr. Weir appears to be a most happy specimen of energy and success in visitation ; but he had long been a visitor, and probably before commencing that line had, in habits, been very different from the greater part of the grave and sober visitors from the college.

A very intelligent friend, who first mentioned the idea of this sort of visitation to me, proposed that a physician and a lawyer should visit jointly. It appears to me this is objectionable, as tending to double the expenses of the commission, and as a double visitation seems in itself undesirable. The medical man should take his turn in each of the circuits of visitation. On any case of apparent medical necessity, the ordinary visitor might call in medical aid, as the medical visitor might legal. For the kingdom in general, I should think two visitations in the year sufficient. The houses near London might, with ease, be visited oftener. With three commissioners, one constantly remaining in London, and the three taking the residence there in turn, two taking half-yearly circuits, and so dividing the whole business equally amongst them, a sufficient superintendence of all the mad-houses in the kingdom might be obtained ; and that at an expense bearing no proportion to its great importance.

There is another visitation, on which, before I

conclude, I will say a few words in addition to what has been here and there incidentally said: it is the visitation of the public, most essential for its influence on governors, committees, magistrates, and visitors, whether parliamentary or private. To the higher classes of society it is obnoxious to have their relatives seen and known in these receptacles; nay, even to have it known they are there. Against this feeling, I would not for a moment contend; but beyond this feeling, and beyond the necessities of privacy which the well-being of the patient requires, I would not have the admission to an asylum merely *as* open as the admission to any other hospital, but more open, in the same degree in which extended protection to the individuals enclosed in it is more called for.

The inmate of an asylum may never leave it; may never be able to rehearse the story of his wrongs, if he do leave it; and however truly he tell them, may not, from wildness of manner, or suspiciousness of situation, deserve or obtain belief. In an hospital for the sick, even if a patient die, his neighbour of the next *bed* can, and will, tell the story of his sufferings and ill usage, if he have suffered and been ill used. “The visit of a friend is always pleasant,” said the poor blanketed and chained woman in Bethlem; and I am much mistaken if most of the visitants of an asylum are

not, in some sense, entitled to the name of friends. Any change in an asylum is acceptable and amusing : the sight of strangers, in general, peculiarly so. There are, unquestionably, exceptions ; and persons disturbed by the entrance of company, might, for the time, be removed.

That great error exists on this point has long been apparent to me, and the source of the error equally apparent. Strangers create some trouble ; but, worse than that, they see too much, and say too much ; and before the due admission of strangers, neither cribs, nor chains, nor infirmaries, could stand their ground. .

CHAP. VI.

*Propositions contained in the Report of the
Committee.*

I HAVE deferred adverting to the mode of visitation proposed by the Committee, till all those principles were elucidated which affect their propositions.

The Third Proposition of the Report suggests that the Secretary of State for the home department should annually appoint ——— persons; of whom, five should be police-magistrates, and five physicians, who, together, are to form a commission of visitation for Middlesex and London, with its vicinity. Fourth: That such visitors meet four times, at least, yearly. Tenth: That every licensed house be inspected by three such visitors, of which one shall be a magistrate, at least four times in the year. Eleventh: That, on special application to the Secretary of State, relative to county asylums, he may appoint any of the London visitors, together with any physicians or magistrates of the

county whence the complaint arises, to make such enquiries as seem to him proper.

Simply considered, as a mode of visitation, this plan is liable to no objection; but, as comprising the whole of a visiting system, it is entirely imperfect: it is a kind of mixture of the different species already so well known; and there is nothing in the nature of the mixture which should add force by combination to the separate parts of which it consists. It comprises no new stimulus, no new motive, no new intelligence. Five physicians, nominated by the Secretary of State, may, or may not, be more successful than five appointed by the College of Physicians. Five magistrates of London will, no doubt, act with as much effect as five in the country; it may be, with somewhat more: and if ten private gentlemen are added, they will little differ from any other ten ordinary governors.

I am unable to discover any characteristics, necessarily, or with great probability, attaching on this body, either to raise or to lower it, in comparison with any other body comprising the same number of persons. It is probable this body, like most others, would act with vigour for a while, whilst the impression of novelty remained: more particularly if the private gentlemen chosen were, as most likely would be the case, selected from those who have actively engaged in the recent enquiries. But let a few years, a very few, pass

away, and where will these gentlemen be found? and what will be their dispositions? Some will be found no more; some will have withdrawn into the country; part, actuated by a merely momentary stimulus, will have subsided into indifference; and, of the very few who remain, and remain interested in the subject of insanity, scarcely one will be discovered, whom the ungrateful task of repeated inspection will not deter from further activity.

In the course of enquiry into mad-house or any other abuses, there is much that is stimulating and attractive. The exercise of the mind; the consciousness of doing well; the consciousness, it may be, that the world sees that we are doing well, and respects us accordingly. But come to the curative process, to the actual execution of the wise plans we may have formed, and a very different scene arises. Forty or fifty houses to visit four times a year; all, from necessity, comprising many objects offensive to the senses and imagination. There are few, indeed, who will not speedily be deterred, unless the influence of extraordinary motives be superinduced, from the continued contemplation of objects such as these.

If I fail to obtain credit to my precept, I think the example I shall adduce will not be thrown away.

The enquiries in the York Asylum case commenced at the close of 1813. At the annual

meeting in 1814, August 25th, about eighty governors attended *. Conceive the whole of 1815 to have passed in somewhat of revolutionary action and reaction. In 1816 and 1817, the institution would be in an ordinary state, except as the impulse of recent transactions might yet operate. The number of gentlemen attending the quarterly courts in 1816 and 1817, were one hundred and twenty-two †; that is, somewhat more than fifteen at each court. The number of persons at the two annual courts of these years was fifty-seven ‡, or about twenty-nine each meeting. The average of the quarterly courts in the next two years sunk to nine; that of the annual courts to seventeen. After trivial fluctuations, the average of 1826 and 1827 was, as to the quarterly courts, eight; as to the annual court, eleven. But at the annual court, 1827, five or six governors only attended; and, at an adjournment, eleven were collected.

Hence, at the end of ten years from what may be called the inspirited state of the Asylum, the attendance at the quarterly courts had fallen off about one half; that at the annual court, a little short of two-thirds. But these comparative numbers do not at all show the real state of decreased activity. The Asylum being immediately in the vicinity of the city of York, might at all times be attended by a considerable body of governors,

* Mr. Gray, p. 78.

† Court Book.

‡ Ib.

without any thing like effort on their part. After the two years above alluded to, (1816—1817,) the attendance of country gentlemen may be said to have gradually sunk to nothing.

It would be most unjust, when making this statement, to omit to say, that the archbishop of York has never, in any degree whatever, remitted the very sedulous attention he gave to the interests of the institution, from the first revision of its concerns in 1813.

It is not to be inferred from these facts, that the Asylum at York, though in one very serious part in a neglected state, is also in a state undeserving of public attention. The contrary seems to be the opinion of the many persons who occasionally view it. But if it be, as we presume it is, *at present* well conducted, both with respect to the comfort and well-being of the patients, and the stability of the funds necessary for its support, it is not to be concealed, but ought most openly to be stated, that a deserted house cannot long flourish.

There is, I am convinced, no designed desertion of duty in the gentlemen of the county who are governors; I believe, no positive indifference: but positive inactivity will have its due effects, whatever the influences from which it draws its origin.

I have considered the general subject in three points of view, as it concerned visitors, properly so called; as it concerned governors or managers,

who were also, by office, visitors ; as it concerns general superintendence or inspection.

The proposed commission has nothing in common with the real special visitor. From his frequent and solitary visitation alone, can we hope to attain and lay open the minutiae of a receptacle for the insane.

I have already said, this commission would form a good board of management ; but it does not comprise *one* of the very essential qualities requisite in the power ultimately superintending. First, The commission, whether it amount to fifteen, twenty, or whatever other number, is too extensive for individual responsibility. If a commission of ten or twenty does ill, the charge falls on the whole ten or twenty as a body, against no individual singly ; and, if it does well, the praise is equally general, and individually applies to none. Every man, in the former case, has a right to say, and will say, with effect, "I am one to ten ; how can I be blamed ? and what is my voice amongst so many ?" If this does not entirely pass, it at all events will leave him little to be disturbed at. He may be glad enough to catch at the tenth or the twentieth part of the praise ; but is not likely to succeed. In a word, in such a situation there is nothing to fear, and little to hope ; consequently, no personal stimulus or responsibility.

Secondly, Ten or twenty commissioners giving a small portion of their time to visitation, can only

look on it as a secondary matter. It is not their business—their occupation; but something secondary and accessory to it. It is not their source of emolument or of fame. It is not a matter they can be skilled in; not so skilled, nor so interested, as if it were their great object and great source of emolument. No considerable number of persons can, under any circumstances, form a proper commission of visitation. Nor can any small number, with due effect, exercise its authorities, unless it is fixed upon them as the great object of their pursuit—their source of honour or disgrace.

All these observations apply, with added ones, where country cases are concerned. The visitors are not to interfere till called on by the Secretary of State; and who is to call the secretary to call them? Some county; that is, when some other asylum shall have incased in iron some other Norris, for some other nine years, the Secretary of State is to send a London commissioner, with a file and a hammer, to let him loose!

This is not visitation. Visitation should remark and correct even the minor evils of the system. On their first appearance it should give instruction—check the progress of selfishness or inhumanity; and not lie in wait till called in to do what, in the case of gross and acknowledged mischief, the common sense and common feeling of

mankind will most surely achieve without any extrinsic aid.

I sincerely hope a Committee of the House of Commons will be again appointed, and that it may confine its efforts to this single subject; being very sure, that, by progressive and not hasty steps, the object wished for will be obtained.

When a wiser system of visitation shall have fully laid open the whole of the case, remedies may be applied, with some certainty of effect. At present it is in vain to legislate where, though the evils are sufficiently obvious, how they should be rectified is a matter of perplexity and doubt.

THE END.

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